

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 1 and 10 to 18, claims 2 to 9 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the indication that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statements, PTO-1449 papers and cited references.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter contained in claims 5 to 9. In this regard, the Examiner will note that claim 5 has been rewritten herein in independent form to include all of the features of its base claim, i.e., claim 1 as originally filed. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 5 is in condition for immediate allowance.

Since claims 6 to 9 ultimately depend from claim 5, it is respectfully submitted that claims 6 to 9 are also in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 2 to 4 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 5. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 2 to 4 are also in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejection of Claims 1 to 4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 to 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2002/0030950. While Applicants do not necessarily agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 1 has been canceled herein without prejudice, and claims 2 to 4 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 5, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the present rejection is moot, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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